

Magazine Feature Section

Facing the Bombardment.

Third Baseman Has Hardest Job of All Infield Positions, Errors Being Marked Against Him After He Really Has Done Wonderful Work.

IF HE has a good pair of hands. If he can handle grounders and rollers and stop hot line drives. If his throwing arm is better than ordinary. If he can get the ball away on a line to first base. If he is quick as lightning on his feet, able to rush forward to seize the bunt almost off the bat, or rush back quickly enough to pull down the ball if it is not a bunt. If he can dash up against the right-field stands spiked shoes. If he can stand the mad rush of the base runner on his way home and show no fear of the and catch the hard foul flies. If he can think quickly and not become confused when the bases are filled and he fields a bunt—Then he has the makings of a good third baseman.

Third base is the hardest of the infield positions to play, and the guardian of the sack must have all mental and physical qualifications of the other infielders in a more pronounced degree. Good third basemen are few and far between; always have been and always will be.

Going back after the bunt, fielding and throwing it to the proper place in the shortest possible time, is the chief business of the third baseman. He must have a good pair of hands, must be quick on his feet, and must never become "rattled."

The ball is hit to third base harder than any other part of the infield. At second and short the ball has lost some of its force, but at third it is almost as hard as the moment it leaves the bat. If the third baseman cannot seize it he must make an attempt to "knock it down." Many times he succeeds, and quite often, if he doesn't recover it in time to make the play at first, he is charged with an error, which is one of the penalties of playing the position.

The intelligent third baseman—the one who studies the game—knows, as do the other fielders, out and in, how to play for the different batters. But in the case of the first or second baseman or the shortstop there is more time to change one's position than at third base. At the latter station the fielder plays in the position where the batter should shoot the ball. But, as is well known, the good batter is the one who can send the ball "where they ain't" and because of the speed of the ball the third baseman has little time to shift position.

It is in the bunting proposition, however, that the third baseman must be skilled. When he plays in for the bunt he knows the batter is going to try to knock the ball past him. When he



BAKER, YANKEES.

ing into third. And he has to protect himself from being spiked.

Looking over the infield, it is the third baseman who must face the real bombardment.

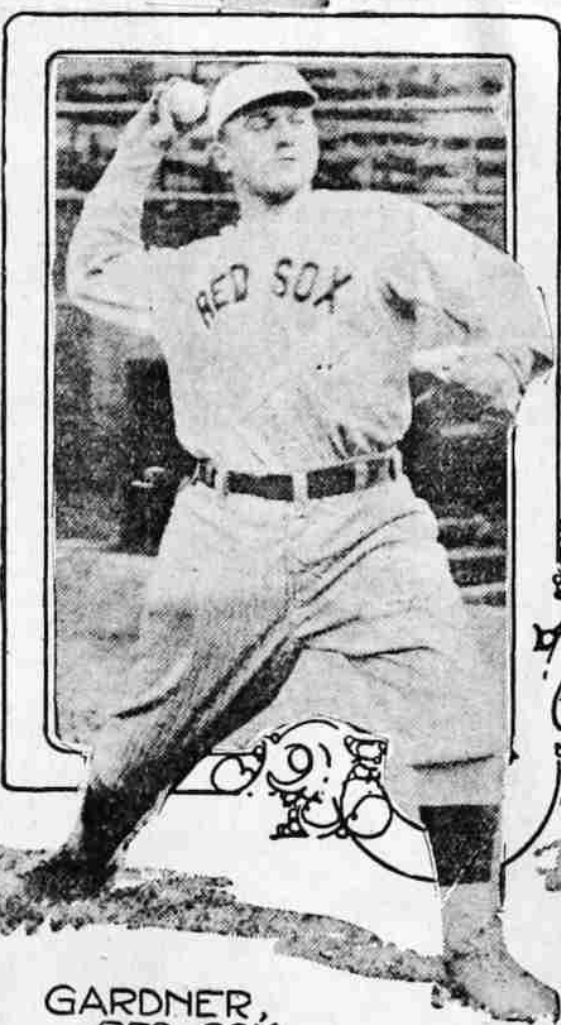
The greatest of all third basemen, past or present, was Jimmy Collins, who worked with the Red Sox for ten years, retiring eight or nine years ago. There is none today who can equal him.

Collins was fast as lightning and had a wonderful pair of hands. He could rush in for a bunt and then tear back to his base in case of an attempted double steal, or a hit and run, better than any one else before or since. He was the perfection of grace in his fielding and, added to this, he was a heavy slugger.

Arthur Devlin of the Giants was another great third baseman, as was Bill Bradley of Cleveland and Bill Nash of the Boston Braves, all of them being rangy and able to cover much ground. Others of the past generation of players who ranked among the best were: Tom Burns of the Cubs, Jerry Denny of Pittsburgh and St. Louis, and George Davis, John McGraw was a third baseman, principally because he had a poor pair of hands.

Larry Gardner of the Boston Sox, considered

WILL HE MAKE IT?



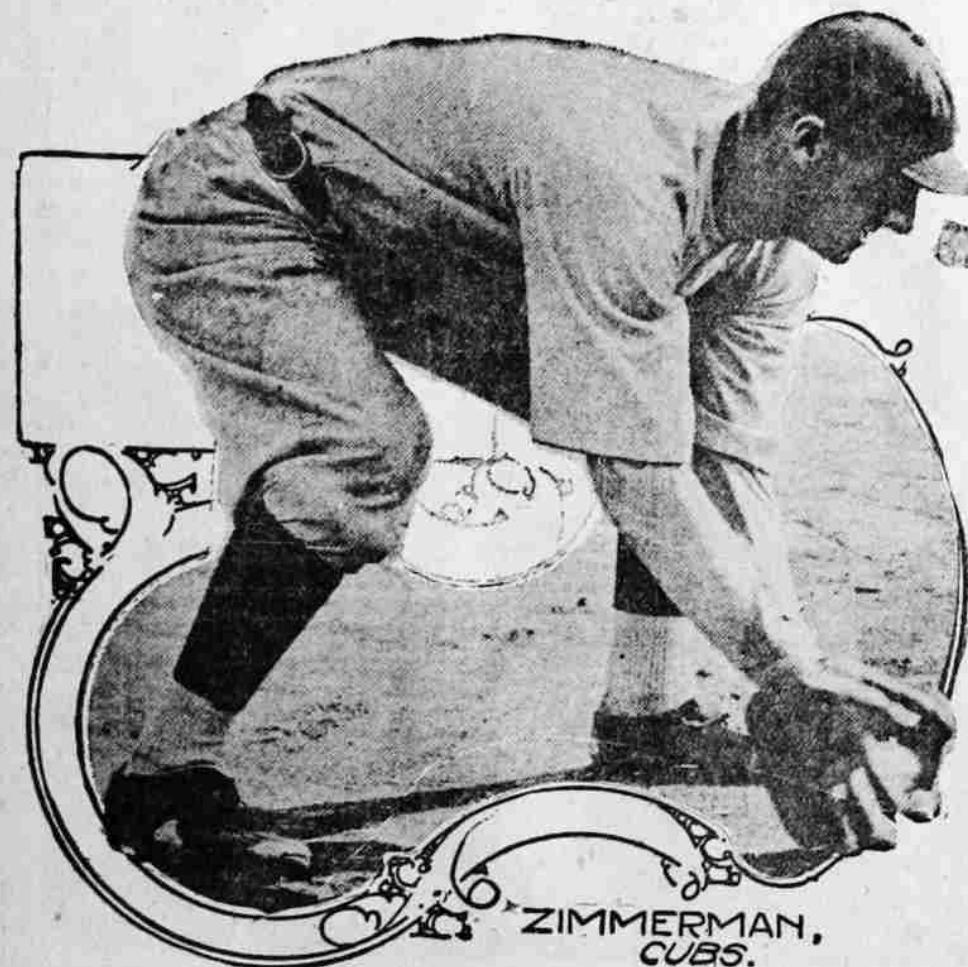
GARDNER, RED SOX.

Austin was the only other third baseman to play more than 100 games last season. In 141 games he handled 133 put-outs, made 264 assists, 41 errors, and his average was .917.

In the National League eight third basemen played in more than 100 games. Heinie Groh led them with a fielding average of .969 for 131 games in which he made 153 put-outs, 280 assists and 14 errors. Byrne played in 105 games, made 98 put-outs, 183 assists and 9 errors, for an average of .960. Lobert, in 103 games, made 109 put-outs, 192 assists and 18 errors. Smith of Boston, in 157 games, made 170 put-outs, 292 assists 26 errors and averaged .947. Baird of Pittsburgh, in 120 games, made 142 put-outs, 226 assists, 24 errors and averaged .939. Phelan of the Cubs, in 110 games, made 136 put-outs, 203 assists, 22 errors and averaged .939. Betzel, who played 105 games, for the Cardinals while Beck was disabled, had 105 put-outs, 221 assists, made 22 errors and averaged .937.

In the Federal League there were but four third sackers who played in more than 100 games last season. Of these, Mowrey was the leader, playing in 151 games, making 176 put-outs, 271 assists, 19 errors and averaging .959. McKee of Newark played in 117 games, made 132 put-outs, 226 assists, 19 errors and averaged .956. Walsh of Baltimore and St. Louis, played in 116 games, made 137 put-outs, 199 assists, 23 errors and averaged .936. Holt of Brooklyn played in 110 games, made 159 put-outs, 32 errors and averaged .927.

Heinie Zimmerman is a poor third baseman for the reason he becomes confused too often just at the time when the third baseman should have all his wits about him. It is his worst fault. He fields fairly well, has a fair throwing arm, is fast going after fouls, and if he could maintain his control at critical moments, he would be a fair third baseman. His value to his club is in his hitting and base running.



ZIMMERMAN, CUBS.

Plays back he knows the batter in some circumstances is going to try for a bunt. It is up to the fielder to run hurriedly back on a bunt, and that is the real test for the third-sacker. He must know the bunting game, and to know this he must know each individual batter, and, besides this knowledge, he must have the physical qualifications necessary to back it up.

Of course, he has the longest throws of any player in the infield, and for that reason speed and accuracy are necessary. He has more foul flies to go after than any other infielder.

And then there is the question of base runners. When a runner gets past second he is going to take more desperate chances than he would striving to reach first or second. The fielder has many throws to take from the outfield while he is trying to block the runner com-

ing back he knows the batter in some circumstances is going to try for a bunt. It is up to the fielder to run hurriedly back on a bunt, and that is the real test for the third-sacker. He must know the bunting game, and to know this he must know each individual batter, and, besides this knowledge, he must have the physical qualifications necessary to back it up.

Of course, he has the longest throws of any player in the infield, and for that reason speed and accuracy are necessary. He has more foul flies to go after than any other infielder.

And then there is the question of base runners. When a runner gets past second he is going to take more desperate chances than he would striving to reach first or second. The fielder has many throws to take from the outfield while he is trying to block the runner com-

AUSTIN, BROWNS.

The wise base runner, who knows the various pitchers and has learned to study their actions can generally tell before the ball leaves his hands if he is going to throw to the base to nab the runner. Some pitchers telegraph this information in advance, and when the runner knows how to take the message he is enabled to take a longer lead off the base than he would otherwise.

There are a number of players who make up by intelligence their lack of speed in running the bases, and these will often steal more bases than the swifter runner who hasn't the brains.

RUSSELL BLACKBURN is one of the baseball performers who, it would appear, are meant to shine in the minor leagues, but who can never make good in faster baseball. The White Sox recently turned Blackburn over to Toronto, but Blackburn has stated that he intends to enter business and quit the game.

In 1906 he was the bright star of the minors, playing on the Providence team under Hugh Duffy. The White Sox paid a large sum for him, and the following year he made a poor showing in the American League. He later hurt his knee and was out of the game for nearly a year. He was then sent to the Milwaukee club and again put up a sensational performance, which won him another trial in the majors.

But last year he failed to show anything with the White Sox. Some persons said it was lack of nerve. It may not be that, but there are certain players who just can't play when they get in the majors, whereas they are world-beaters in the minors.

PLANK, Coombs and Bender, that great trio developed by Connie Mack, will be watched with considerable interest this year. Plank, last year with the St. Louis Federals, led that league in efficient pitching. It remains to be seen what he will do this year back in the American League. It was in 1901 that Plank joined the Athletics, and he was one of the great figures of the greatest team ever gathered together in the history of the game. He jumped to the Federals in the fall of 1914.

Bender joined the Athletics three years later, and Connie Mack, with the aid of Mike Powers, worked patiently with the Indian until he became a great pitcher. But even after that he sorely tried his manager in more ways than one. Bender jumped to the Baltimore Federals at the time Plank jumped to the St. Louis team. Last year toward the end of the summer he was given his unconditional release. Otto Knabe found the task of trying to manage the Indian beyond him.

This year the Indian will play with the Phillies. It depends on himself whether he pitches good ball. He is still a great pitcher and he is one of the greatest strategists in baseball. If he keeps in condition he will help the Phillies wonderfully.

Coombs' great trouble formerly was lack of confidence in himself, but he gradually grew this. He was given his release by the Athletics more than a year ago after an illness of nearly two years. He signed with the Brooklyn Nationals last fall and did fairly good work. There are many who think he will pull a come-back this season.

To Jessie B.

WHILE youth and beauty are essential. To enter in the movie race. Just being sweet and ornamental is not enough to win a place. You must have brains as well as beauty. And wit and comeliness of form. A willingness for any duty. And nerve to weather any storm. If you're endowed by Mother Nature With all these attributes of fame, You are indeed a happy creature, And fit to enter any game.

Sportdom's Periscope

RUNNING the bases is the most spectacular part of a ball game and is more fascinating than the mere clouting out hits. It doesn't take any vast amount of brains to hit the ball. Some of our most prominent sluggers are not overburdened with brains, but it does take a high order of intelligence and good baseball sense to run the bases correctly. And it is on the bases where a great player shows his true worth.

That is where Ty Cobb shines. First and foremost, of course, he is a great natural hitter, but it is his keen judgment and sense in running the bases that makes him the most spectacular player of the day. The proper distance to take off first or second base with various pitchers and various infielders is one of the most important points in running the bases. There are some infielders which become "rattled" the moment one or more men get on the bases. And this condition of mind often spreads to the pitcher, especially if he be a youngster or a temperamental performer. The runner may coax any number of throws from the pitcher to the baseman, with the hope that the ball may be thrown away, and this is often done.

game than on the defensive.

Charley Deal, who played third for the Boston Braves in 1914, then jumped to the St. Louis Federals, and is now with the Browns, is a fair third baseman. He is still a youngster, is smart, and in a few years should acquire the polish necessary to a finished third baseman.

McKee, who played with the Federals and was obtained by the Giants this spring, is a good fielder, but not an extraordinary one. The chief value of Vitt of Detroit is his hitting ability and not his fielding.

Malsel's chief value is in running bases. Austin of the Browns is unusually good on fly balls, but is bad on ground balls.

Connie Mack, last season, tried to make a third baseman of Schanz, but failed. Third basemen are born, not made.

Wagner of Pittsburgh is a wonderful third baseman, but it has been years since he played the position. His great pair of hands and his speed were great assets in fielding this sack.

Bobby Byrne of the Phillies is quick and has a good throwing arm, but his hands are not as good as they should be, and he is hardly heavy enough for the position.

Zinn Beck of the Cardinals has the greatest throwing arm of any third baseman in the game. He can knock down a liner, chase it about and then his rifle-like throw to first will make the fastest runner appear slow. In a recent game in Pittsburgh, Carey, first man up, tripped. The next three batters hunted to Beck. He fielded each bunt perfectly, held Carey at third on each occasion and made the throws to first in time to catch each runner. This is about as near perfection as one is liable to see under such circumstances.

Heinie Groh, Getz, Phelan and Smith of Boston are among some of the third basemen who are more valuable in the offensive part of the